

REVIEWS

HANDBOOK OF CHILD HEALTH. By Austin Furniss, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S. (Edin.), L.D.S., D.P.H. Pp. 280. Sylviro Publications Ltd. 25s.

THIS little book is described in the author's preface as a review of the main features of child health, specially intended for students preparing for the diploma of Child Health. It is made up principally of descriptions of the services of the several public health departments concerned with infants and children, and may prove useful in this respect. Unfortunately, the matter is not clearly set out, and the author's style of writing makes it difficult to understand exactly what is meant in some places.

He is, in general, better when dealing with the administrative aspects of the services than when describing clinical conditions. Clinicians will find it difficult to agree with the bald statement that children (at nursery schools) who have enlarged tonsils and adenoids "invariably do well after operation." It is difficult to understand the principle of selection of clinical descriptions of diseases, e.g., the chapter on "more common bone and joint and neurological conditions" devotes three pages to achondroplasia, but makes no mention of talipes, and includes such rare conditions as Schilder's disease.

It is, perhaps, a sign of the times that, although there are recommendations for referring children to Orthopædic Clinics, Speech Clinics, Child Guidance Clinics, and to Pædiatricians, there is no mention of the general practitioner or of co-operation with the family doctor.

The book would be much improved if Dr. Furniss confined himself to describing the organisation of the health services and the work done at the various clinics, and omitted descriptions of diseases which are better described in standard text-books. Bibliographies at the end of the chapters to enable the numerous references to be traced, and facsimiles of the forms quoted would also be helpful. The price (25s.) seems excessive for 270-odd pages without illustrations.

W. A. B. C.

MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL—SPECIAL REPORT SERIES—No. 276 :

Occupational Factors in the Ætiology of Gastric and Duodenal Ulcers, with an Estimate of their Incidence in the General Population. By Richard Doll and F. Avery Jones, with the assistance of M. J. Buckatzsch. H.M. Stationery Office, 1951. 2s. 6d.

THIS is an account of a survey to determine the incidence of peptic ulcer and to investigate the rôle of occupation in etiology. In London the incidence is calculated as being 5.8 per cent. for men aged between 15-64, and 1.9 per cent. for women in the same age group. The authors estimate that the total number of persons now living in England and Wales with peptic ulcer, past or present, is nearly one and a half million. Over half a million men annually suffer from symptoms. Occupations having a high incidence for duodenal ulcer are doctors, foremen, business executives, and workers holding responsible positions in industry. In contrast, significantly low rates of incidence were found among agricultural workers and in the large group of sedentary workers, composing clerks, administrative and executive civil servants, research workers. Though adequate provision was made to include a representative number of drivers of motor vehicles and bus conductors, there was no direct evidence that a higher rate of incidence occurred in these groups than in other groups. Investigation of the possible bad effects of shift work or of irregularity in the taking of food also failed to show any association between them and the existence of an ulcer.

The report concludes, therefore, that actual conditions of work play no important rôle in the genesis of gastric-duodenal dyspepsia. As one would expect, the authors noted a strong correlation between anxiety and duodenal ulcer, the patients being commonly of the hard-working, ambitious over-conscientious type. This aspect of the problem, however, was not investigated specially.

R. S. A.